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MONITORING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NAIROBI FORWARD-LOOKING STRATEGIES FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMEN

Statement submitted by the International Alliance of Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (category I)

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is circulated in accordance with paragraphs 29 and 30 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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1. Reacting to the growing need articulated by its constituent members, the International Alliance of Women (IAW), since 1979, has constantly worked towards placing the issue of violence against women on the international agenda.

2. From the beginning of its activities in this particular field, the IAW has repeatedly stressed that violence against women represents a violation of their rights as human beings and that no improvement of the situation of women would be possible without addressing this problem at national and international levels.

3. The aims of these endeavours have been:

To raise awareness for the universal nature of the problem and, in particular, its hidden character;

To encourage women victims of violence all over the world to speak out and to disperse the shadows in which the issue has been concealed up to now.

4. Furthermore, in all the above-mentioned efforts, the IAW has consistently advocated close cooperation on the issue of violence against women between such United Nations bodies as the Commission on the Status of Women, the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and the

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Committee on Crime Prevention and Control, in order to effectively combat this global problem.

5. In consequence, the IAW welcomed resolution 1991/18 of the Economic and Social Council entitled "Violence against women in all its forms" calling, inter alia, on the above-mentioned United Nations bodies to prepare the framework of an international instrument that would explicitly address the issue of violence against women as well as General Recommendation No. 12 (eighth session, 1989) of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women calling State Parties to report on measures taken to eradicate violence against women.

6. The IAW firmly believes that only a concerted inter-agency, inter-disciplinary action, including all sectors of society will prove effective and conducive to eliminating violence against women.

7. In the light of the above, the IAW strongly and actively supports every effort:

To improve and strengthen the communications procedure of the Commission on the Status of Women, for a great many women the only channels to get their voices and complaints heard;

To prepare an international instrument addressing specifically the issue of violence perpetrated against women. In order to be effective, such an instrument should not only establish direct and unbureaucratic links between the grass-roots and national as well as international bodies, but also should relate to those countries that have not ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or have ratified with extensive reservations. In order to meet both targets, the IAW, while welcoming a United Nations declaration on violence against women as a first step, strongly recommends the appointment of a Special Rapporteur on violence against women with those terms of reference contained in the report of the Expert Group Meeting on Violence against Women (EGM/VAW/1991/1), held at Vienna, from 11 to 15 November 1991.

8. According to the experience of IAW affiliated societies, women cannot be convinced to speak out and denounce violence against them - particularly within the family - without the possibility to hide in a refuge until the moment they are able to find a paid job and a place to stay. However, for financial reasons, refuges for battered women and their children are lacking all over the world. The IAW therefore recommends the creation of a special United Nations fund to finance the creation of refuges for women victims of violence and their children in Member States.